

MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2023

2.00 PM



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councillor Gloria Johnson Chairman
Councillor Paul Fellows Vice-Chairman

Councillor Matthew Bailey	Councillor Bridget Ley
Councillor Emma Baker	Councillor Paul Martin
Councillor Rhys Baker	Councillor Penny Milnes
Councillor Ashley Baxter	Councillor Virginia Moran
Councillor David Bellamy	Councillor Charmaine Morgan
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing	Councillor Chris Noon
Councillor Pam Byrd	Councillor Habibur Rahman
Councillor Richard Cleaver	Councillor Rhea Rayside
Councillor Helen Crawford	Councillor Nick Robins
Councillor Steven Cunnington	Councillor Penny Robins
Councillor James Denniston	Councillor Susan Sandall
Councillor Phil Dilks	Councillor Max Sawyer
Councillor Richard Dixon-Warren	Councillor Rob Shorrock
Councillor Patsy Ellis	Councillor Vanessa Smith
Councillor Phil Gadd	Councillor Peter Stephens
Councillor Ben Green	Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Tim Harrison	Councillor Paul Stokes
Councillor Graham Jeal	Councillor Elvis Stooke
Councillor Anna Kelly	Councillor Rosemary Trollope-Bellew
Councillor Jane Kingman	Councillor Sarah Trotter
Councillor Gareth Knight	Councillor Murray Turner
Councillor Philip Knowles	Councillor Mark Whittington
Councillor Zoe Lane	Councillor Jane Wood
Councillor Robert Leadendam	Councillor Paul Wood
	Councillor Sue Woolley

OFFICERS

Karen Bradford, Chief Executive
Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer)
Nicola McCoy-Brown, Director of Growth and Culture

Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer and Assistant Director of Governance and Public Protection
Jodie Archer, Head of Housing Services
Patrick Astill, Communications Officer
Lucy Bonshor, Democratic Services Officer
Amy Pryde, Democratic Services Officer

Prior to the commencement of formal proceedings, the Chairman asked Members to join her in a minute's silence following the recent deaths of former Councillors Martin Wilkins and Andrew Moore. Councillor Graham Jeal gave a short speech in memory of the former Councillors.

51. Public Open Forum

One member of the public registered to speak, however, the questions were rejected under paragraph 11.8 (b) and (d) of the Council Procedure Rules.

52. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Barry Dobson
Councillor Pam Bosworth
Councillor Nikki Manterfield
Councillor Ian Stokes
Councillor Ian Selby

53. Disclosure of Interests

No interests were disclosed.

The Monitoring Officer informed Members that a dispensation had been granted for all District Councillors who were also Grantham Charter Trustees in relation to the Community Governance Review for Grantham. Therefore, all Members could participate in the debate and vote.

54. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2023

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2023 were proposed, seconded and **AGREED** as a correct record.

55. Communications (including Chairman's Announcements)

The Council noted the Chairman's engagements.

The following announcements were discussed:

- Devolution for Greater Lincolnshire

- Levelling Up Fund Round 3
- The achievement of Housing Services coming out of special measures from the Regulator after 3 years
- Scout Group visit to the Council
- Member Breifing reminder (St Martins Park) – 5 December 2023 at 4pm
- SKDC being shortlisted for 2 awards within ‘The Personnel Today Awards’
- Public Consultation commenced – Corporate Plan
- Chairman’s Christmas Lunch reminder – 15 December 2023

56. Making of the Claypole Neighbourhood Plan

Members considered the making of the Claypole Neighbourhood Plan. The report sought Members’ approval to formally ‘make’ the Claypole Neighbourhood Plan (NP) as part of the South Kesteven Development Plan. The report followed the NP’s successful referendum which was held on 5 October 2023.

The following points were highlighted during debate:

- The importance of a neighbourhood plan in relation to material consideration for Planning terms.

Having been proposed and seconded and upon being put to the vote, it was **AGREED:**

DECISION:

That Full Council:

1) Approves the Claypole Neighbourhood Plan (referendum version) to become part of South Kesteven District Council’s ‘Statutory Development Plan’, and a material consideration for determining planning applications in the Claypole Neighbourhood Area.

2) Delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Planning to make minor ‘nonmaterial’ changes to the Claypole Neighbourhood Plan as necessary, and exercise all of the Council’s functions and responsibilities in relation to making the Claypole Neighbourhood Plan.

57. Appointments to Outside Bodies and Committees

Members considered a report that provided the Council with an opportunity to appoint Members to two vacancies on outside bodies (Rural Services Network and the Grantham Almshouse Charity). Members were also requested to fill a vacancy for the South Kesteven Coalition Group on the Rural and Communities Overview and

Scrutiny Committee. The report provided Group Leaders with an opportunity to make any further amendments to their representation on Committees.

Councillor Robert Leadenham and Councillor Tim Harrison were both nominated to be the representative on Grantham Almshouse outside body.

Following the vote, Councillor Tim Harrison was appointed as the representative Grantham Alms Houses.

Councillor Mark Whittington declared an interest that he was the Lincolnshire County Council representative of the Rural Services Network and sat on the National Executive Committee of the outside body.

Councillor Murray Turner was nominated to become the representative for Rural Services Network.

Having been proposed and seconded and upon being put to the vote, it was **AGREED:**

DECISION:

That Full Council:

- 1. Approved the following appointments:**
 - **Councillor Robert Leadenham to fill the vacant seat on Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
 - **Councillor Matthew Bailey to sit on Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, replacing Councillor Robert Leadenham.**
 - **Councillor Matthew Bailey to sit on Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, replacing Councillor Jane Wood.**
- 2. Approved the appointment of Councillor Murray Turner to sit on Rural Services Network.**
- 3. Approved the appointment of Councillor Tim Harrison to sit on Grantham Alms Houses**

58. Community Governance Review for Grantham

The Chairman of the Community Governance Review Working Group, Councillor Graham Jeal, presented the report.

Members considered the report which outlined the outcome of the second consultation stage of the Community Governance Review for the unparished area of Grantham following the Council's formal proposition to create a Parish Council for Grantham.

An amendment was proposed to part 3 of the recommendation to increase the precept from £46,010 to £70,000.

The following points were highlighted during debate of the proposed amendment:

- Concern of the tax increase following the proposed precept that would be met by Grantham residents.
- The mayoral budget underspends were discussed, it was suggested that the underspends be utilised as a one-off payment to the proposed new Grantham Parish Council. A reserve figure from previous underspends from grants and taxpayers of approximately £40,000 could be used to finance costs in the first year of Grantham Parish Council's operation.
- Members discussed the democratic mandate of the proposed new Grantham Parish Council.
- The transfer and change of job roles of staff from Grantham Charter Trustees to the Parish Council was raised.
- Grantham Charter Trustees had rejected the proposal of an increased precept.
- Members raised the need for a Parish/Town Clerk, and the need for a precept of £70,000 would allow the Parish Council to serve 38,000 people in Grantham sufficiently.

The Monitoring Officer clarified that the Community Governance Review Working Group had reviewed the budget on the precept arrangement at its previous two meetings.

Following the vote, the proposed amendment to increase the precept from £46,010 to £70,000 by South Kesteven District Council for the Community Governance Review for Grantham was lost.

Having been proposed and seconded and upon being put to the vote, it was **AGREED:**

DECISION:

That Full Council:

1. Notes the responses of the second stage of the consultation process associated with the Community Governance Review for Grantham.

2. Approves the Order, at Appendix D of this report, to establish a Parish Council for Grantham based upon the following principles:

- **That the boundary for the new Parish Council for Grantham replicates the existing unparished area of Grantham**
- **That the warding arrangements for the new Parish Council for Grantham replicate existing District Council Wards, as outlined in Appendix A of this report 37 Agenda Item 8**

- That the size of the new Parish Council for Grantham consists of 22 Councillors, comprising 4 Councillors for St Vincent's Ward and 3 Councillors for all remaining Wards
- That the first elections to the new Parish Council for Grantham be held on 2 May 2024

3. Sets a budget for the first year of the newly established Parish Council for Grantham of £46,010, to be precepted by South Kesteven District Council.

4. Approves a one-off payment to the Parish Council for Grantham of any unallocated funds collected by South Kesteven District Council from Grantham Charter Trustee bank accounts upon the dissolution of the Grantham Charter Trustees.

5. Allows the costs of running the first elections for the Parish Council for Grantham to be spread across the three years of its first term of office, prior to its next elections in May 2027.

59. Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places

Members considered the report presented by the Returning Officer that detailed proposals for future Polling Districts and Polling Places following the compulsory review of polling arrangements. The Council undertook compulsory reviews of Polling Districts and Polling Places every five years.

The concerns of an absent Member of the Council were expressed on his behalf, in relation to the change of a Polling Station location within the constituency of Grantham.

The following points were highlighted during debate of the proposal:

- Whether there were criteria to be met when requesting a review of Polling Districts and Polling Places before the compulsory period had elapsed.

The Returning Officer clarified that the reviews were compulsory every five years, however, if a request for an interim review was received, a report would be brought to Full Council for discussion and approval.

Having been proposed and seconded and upon being put to the vote, it was **AGREED:**

DECISION:

That the Council:

1. Approves the schedule of polling districts and polling places detailed in Appendix 1.

2. Approves the relocation of the Deeping St James polling station for polling district DJB3 from the Deeping St James CP Primary School to the Deepings Methodist Church.

3. That the approved revised polling districts and polling places take effect from 1 December 2023.

60. Amendment to Constitution - Procedure for Dealing with Complaints Against Councillors

The Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee, Councillor Sarah Trotter, presented the report which provided notification of a recommendation by the Standards Committee to include the revised procedure for dealing with complaints against Councillors as part of the Constitution. Officers were thanked for their support on this topic.

The complaints procedure against elected Members was not currently part of the Council's Constitution. On 6 September 2023, Standards Committee approved a revised complaints procedure and held a healthy debate around its content.

Having been proposed and seconded and upon being put to the vote, it was **AGREED:**

DECISION:

That Full Council approves the inclusion of the revised procedure for dealing with complaints against Councillors as part of the Constitution under Part 5 (Codes and Protocols).

61. Members' Open Questions

Question 1 - Councillor Charmaine Morgan to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste (this role was a jobshare, and the question was answered by Councillor Patsy Ellis)

Councillor Charmaine Morgan asked the Cabinet Member whether she would engage and work with Planning Officers on looking at the public consultation policy for trees protected by a Tree Preservation Orders.

The Cabinet Member was willing to support this and would work in liaison with Planning Officers.

Question 2 - Councillor Nick Robins to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Nick Robins asked the Leader of the Council to explain the reasons for an extraordinary high turnover of key staff and the impact of this on staff morale, SKDC as an employer and the costs to the Council on continuous recruitment.

The Leader of the Council acknowledged the question and declared he was unaware that SKDC had an extraordinarily high turnover of staff. He referred to a recent meeting of the Employment Committee where it was reported that the percentage of staff turnover was decreasing at present.

Question 3 - Councillor Paul Wood to the Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Paul Wood requested confirmation from the Deputy Leader of the Council on when the Future High Street Fund investment in Grantham Town Centre would begin and whether the Council would be handing back any of the money to Government. It was noted there was a tight timescale.

The Deputy Leader of the Council shared his concerns on the timescale to utilise the funding. Due to reasons outside of the Council's control (Brexit, Covid etc) costs had increased and unfortunately the Council could not afford to complete the two schemes alluded to (Marketplace and five-way roundabout). The Council had reached an agreement with Lincolnshire County Council that the marketplace project would take priority, and the budget was in the process of being allocated. There had been an extension to utilise the funding, therefore, the Deputy Leader of the Council was confident that the money would not be handed back to Government.

Question 4 – Councillor Gareth Knight to the Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Gareth Knight asked the Deputy Leader of the Council for an update on the Grantham Town Team, particularly in terms of recent activity, forthcoming activity, budgetary position, the membership and how somebody may become a member.

The Deputy Leader of the Council shared the same concerns as Councillor Gareth Knight. The Town Team had been included within the bid for the Future High Street Funds. The transparency of the Town Team was an issue, therefore, a decision was made prior to 5 May 2023 regarding the membership of the Town Team. It was noted that the turnover of staff had delayed the process; the next meeting of Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny was due to review the issue on 28 November 2023.

Question 5 – Councillor David Bellamy to the Cabinet Member for Governance and Licensing

Councillor David Bellamy asked the Cabinet Member for Governance and Licensing whether he agreed with the proposals in the Government White Paper regarding taxi licensing.

The Cabinet Member declared he was not overly familiar with the White Paper, however, he was aware of the decision made three years ago regarding the Council's policy in respect of the age of vehicles. Objections from Grantham taxi drivers were recognised and further investigations would take place in conjunction with Licensing Committee on whether there was a need for a change.

Question 6 – Councillor Helen Crawford to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste (this role was a jobshare, and the question was answered by Councillor Rhys Baker)

Councillor Helen Crawford asked the Cabinet Member to clarify a discussion held at a recent Bourne Town Council meeting and whether SKDC would stop maintaining closed churchyards, even though they have an obligation to do so. It was queried as to how many churchyards the District Council maintain and why were they no longer wishing to do it.

The Cabinet Member apologised that he had misspoken without his notes at a previous Bourne Town Council meeting. He confirmed that it was not the correct statement for the position of the Council.

Question 7 – Councillor Susan Sandall to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Susan Sandall asked the Leader of the Council why the Internal Audit company withdrew their services from SKDC.

The Leader of the Council did not have the precise reasons of their withdrawal to hand and was unsure as to whether the reasons could be disclosed within an open meeting.

The Deputy Leader of the Council suggested that Members view the webcast from the previous Governance and Audit Committee meeting, which was in the public domain.

Question 8 - Councillor Zoe Lane to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Councillor Zoe Lane stated that a number of Councillors expressed concerns via e-mail that local tradespeople were reluctant to work with the Council due to the Council not paying invoices in a timely fashion. She asked the Cabinet Member whether they were aware of these issues and if so, what steps were being taken to rectify them.

The Cabinet Member was not aware of the concerns raised and he would investigate and provide a full answer.

Question 9 – Councillor Graham Jeal to Leader of the Council

Councillor Charmaine Morgan had recently raised the idea of supporting businesses in Grantham town centre with free town centre parking on market day. Councillor Graham Jeal asked the Leader of the Council whether he would agree with others that Grantham town centre and its market required additional support over and above additional market towns of the district and free parking on Saturdays would be a welcome start.

The Leader of the Council stated that he very strongly supported markets across the District. A report on Council parking charges was being heard at the next Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee, where one recommendation was to provide one-hour parking in every council car park in Grantham. Free parking all day was currently not deliverable.

Question 10 – Councillor Sue Woolley to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

Councillor Sue Woolley stated that residents around Bourne and surrounding villages were keen to know the possible implications for them, if the Deepings Leisure Centre was reopened, it was likely to result in the loss of income for Bourne Leisure Centre that was run by Leisure SK Ltd. She asked the Cabinet Member what modelling had been undertaken to take this into account.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that modelling was currently being completed, however, papers were not quite ready for publication and the Council were awaiting further papers from the Deepings in order to explore proposals and assess the impact on other leisure facilities in the District.

Question 11 – Councillor Ben Green to the Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Ben Green asked the Deputy Leader of the Council whether the Cabinet would support him when he ran for the Leader position in January 2024.

The Deputy Leader of the Council was unable to answer the question.

Question 12 – Councillor Penny Robins to the Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Penny Robins asked the Deputy Leader of the Council why SKDC had not communicated with a wider audience on the fact it did not receive any money from the Levelling Up funding.

The Deputy Leader of the Council referred Councillor Penny Robins to the Leader's comment at the beginning of the meeting, where he stated that the Council had not received any money from the latest tranche of the Levelling Up fund, and neither did any other Council in Lincolnshire.

Question 13 – Councillor Mark Whittington to the Cabinet Member of the Culture and Leisure.

Councillor Mark Whittington asked the Cabinet Member when the Joint Finance and Culture and Leisure OSC meeting to discuss Deepings Leisure Centre budget proposals would take place, as it had been postponed due to legal advice received or that giving any money to a third party organisation might be in contravention of the state subsidy legislation. It was hoped that a decision be made before the budget setting process for 2024/24 and there was a certain timeframe to be met.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council were awaiting further information prior to having the Joint OSC meeting, so that Members could be properly informed. The meeting was expected to be arranged in the next few weeks and the Council were working hard in order to include it within the budget cycle.

62. Notices of Motion

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to hear agenda item 12b prior to 12a, which had previously been discussed at a meeting prior to Full Council.

63. Councillor Ben Green

Councillor Ben Green proposed the following motion:

Community Governance Review for Little Ponton and Stroxton Parish Council, and Great Ponton Parish Council

Little Ponton and Stroxton Parish Council has remained dormant for a period exceeding four years. Council therefore recognises the need to address the inactivity of Little Ponton and Stroxton Parish Council through appropriate measures.

It is essential to explore viable solutions, including; the potential dissolution of Little Ponton and Stroxton Parish Council; restoration of the status quo ante; or its merger with neighbouring Great Ponton Parish Council, which also falls within Isaac Newton Ward and the Colsterworth Rural Division.

In the event of a merger, Great Ponton Parish Council could serve as the primary governing body, accommodating newly-appointed parish councillors representing Little Ponton and Stroxton, thereby ensuring the long-term sustainability of the governance structure.

Engaging the community through comprehensive consultation is imperative to making an informed decision regarding the future governance structure of the parishes of Little Ponton and Stroxton, and Great Ponton.

A Community Governance Review will be required to properly assess and determine the most appropriate governance for these areas.

To help facilitate the Community Governance Review, it is recommended that a working group, not exceeding five councillors, shall be established. This group shall convene regularly and be overseen by the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee.

Therefore, be it resolved:

1. This Council initiates a Community Governance Review to explore and refine proposals concerning Little Ponton and Stroxton Parish Council. These are to include:

- a) abolishing Little Ponton and Stroxtan Parish Council;
- b) returning it to its previous status;
- c) or merging it with Great Ponton Parish Council.

2. *The working group, comprising a maximum of five councillors from the Governance and Audit Committee, shall be convened to supervise the Community Governance Review process, which will encompass both Little Ponton and Stroxtan Parish, and Great Ponton Parish. This motion is hereby proposed for the consideration and endorsement of the Council.*

The motion was duly seconded.

The following points were raised during debate:

- Great Ponton Parish Council had unanimously voted to agree with the motion.
- A question was raised as to who had approached the proposer and the number of parishioners within the Parish. The proposer confirmed that numerous questions, comments and concerns had been raised about the absence of a regular meeting about Little Ponton. It had been over four years since a meeting last took place to discuss Little Ponton.
- The Parish would be neighbouring the new Spittlegate Heath development.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was **AGREED**.

(a) Councillor Lee Steptoe

Councillor Lee Steptoe proposed the following motion:

Full Council notes that:

1. *The pressure on organisations to pay their fair share of tax has never been stronger.*
2. *Polling from the Institute for Business Ethics finds that “corporate tax avoidance” has, since 2013, been the clear number one concern of the British public when it comes to business conduct.*
3. *Almost two thirds of people (64%) agree that the Government and local councils should consider a company’s ethics and how they pay their tax, as well as value for money and quality of service provided, when awarding contracts to companies.*
4. *Around 17.5% of public contracts in the UK have been won by companies with links to tax havens.*
5. *It has been conservatively estimated that losses from multinational profit-shifting (just one form of tax avoidance) could be costing the UK some £17bn per annum in lost corporation tax revenues.*
6. *The Fair Tax Mark offers a means for business to demonstrate good tax conduct, and has been secured by a wide range of businesses across the UK, including FTSE-listed PLCs, cooperatives, social enterprises and large private businesses.*

Full Council believes that:

1. Paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it shouldn't be.
2. Tax enables us to provide services from education, health and social care, to flood defence, roads, policing and defence. It also helps to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.
3. As recipients of significant public funding, local authorities should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct; be that by ensuring contractors are paying their proper share of tax, or by refusing to go along with offshore tax dodging when buying land and property.
4. Where councils hold substantive stakes in private enterprises, influence should be wielded to ensure that such businesses are exemplars of tax transparency and tax avoidance is shunned.
5. More action is needed, however, as current and proposed new UK procurement law significantly restricts councils' ability to either penalise poor tax conduct (as exclusion grounds are rarely triggered) or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.
6. UK cities, counties and towns can and should stand up for responsible tax conduct - doing what they can within existing frameworks and pledging to do more given the opportunity, as active supporters of international tax justice.

Full Council resolves to:

1. Approve the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration.
2. Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities.
3. Ensure IR35 is implemented robustly and contract workers pay a fair share of employment taxes.
4. Not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.
5. Undertake due diligence where possible to ensure that all new suppliers wishing to trade with the council are transparent and complete declarations on ownership, consolidated profit and loss, that they pay due taxes, business rates and other taxes in line with the Fair Tax standards. Promote the Fair Tax standard to all existing suppliers and request that they seek compliance with the standard.
6. Promote Fair Tax Mark certification especially for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
7. Support Fair Tax Week events in the area and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses are proud to promote responsible tax conduct and pay their fair share of corporation tax.
8. Support calls for urgent reform of UK procurement law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.

Supporting information available at:

<https://fairtaxmark.net/wp1content/uploads/2023/07/Councils-for-Fair-Tax-Declaration-ENG1CYM.pdf>

The motion was duly seconded.

The following points were raised during debate:

- One Member queried how the principle of the motion could be implemented and whether it could be considered by the Governance and Audit Committee.
- Future transparency in any of the Council's contractual arrangements where possible was discussed.
- Whether suppliers that the Council currently worked with abided by the Fair Tax proposal and what the possible changes within their contracts would be, if the proposals were accepted.
- Concerns were raised on the possible restrictions on the Council and the obligation to get the best value.
- Further concerns were raised on the implementation of the IR35 legislation and how many of the Council's housing contractors were IR35 compliant, impact on pensions, treasure strategy, the cost of due diligence and training.
- It was suggested that the motion be referred to the Finance and Economic Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the relevant Committee for further scrutiny.
- Clarification was sought from the Monitoring Officer in regard to contract workers and businesses in which the Council had stakes. It was questioned as to whether Members should declare an interest.

The Monitoring Officer highlighted that the motion did not outline any specific organisations and would not affect any Members adversely, if the motion was accepted.

- It was noted that the motion was to pass a policy for the Council to have the aspiration to be a fair tax organisation and look into the financial arrangements, contracts and investments.

Upon being put to the vote, the motion was **AGREED**.

64. Councillor Vanessa Smith

Councillor Vanessa Smith proposed the following motion:

Preamble

Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt in the UK, and across the world. The average global temperature has already increased by 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels and—alongside this—the natural world has reached crisis point, with 28% of plants and animals threatened with extinction. In addition, the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world as more than one in seven of our plants and animals face extinction, and more than 40% are in decline.

Climate change remains a major concern for UK voters with 66% of people (according to YouGov) expressing they are ‘worried about climate change and its effects’. Alongside this, the popularity of Sir David Attenborough’s Save Our Wild Isles initiative demonstrates public concern that UK wildlife is being destroyed at a terrifying speed.

Climate & Ecology Bill

The Climate & Ecology Bill, a private member’s bill currently before the House of Commons, seeks to address the challenges that this situation poses by creating a whole-of-government approach to deliver a net zero and nature positive future.

Based on the latest science, the CE Bill aims to align current UK environmental policy with the need to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, which was goal agreed to at COP15, via the Kunming1Montreal Framework (22 December 2022); and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the UK’s fair share of the remaining global carbon budget to give the strongest chance of limiting global heating to 1.5°C, which was the goal agreed to at COP21, via the Paris Agreement (12 December 2015).

By bridging the gap between the UK Government’s current delivery, and what has been agreed at international levels, Britain has a chance to be a world leader on climate and the environment; seizing the opportunities of the clean energy transition, including green jobs and skills; reduced energy bills; and boosting the UK’s food and energy security.

South Kesteven District Council notes that:

The Climate and Ecology Bill has been introduced in the UK Parliament on four occasions since 2020, including most recently in the House of Commons 10 May 2023. The Bill is backed by 180 cross-party MPs and Peers, 237 local authorities, alongside the support of eminent scientists, such as Sir David King; NGOs, such as the Wildlife Trusts, the Doctors’ Association, Oxfam, the W.I. and CPRE; businesses, such as The Co-operative Bank, Riverford and The Body Shop; and 42,000 members of the public.

The CE Bill would require the UK Government to develop and achieve a new environmental strategy, which would include:

- 1. Delivering a joined-up environmental plan, as the crises in climate and nature are deeply intertwined, and require a plan that considers both together;*
- 2. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with 1.5°C to ensure emissions are reduced in line with the best chance of meeting the UK’s Paris Agreement obligations;*
- 3. Not only halting, but also reversing the decline in nature, setting nature measurably on the path to recovery by 2030;*
- 4. Taking responsibility for our overseas footprint, both emissions and ecological;*
- 5. Prioritising nature in decision-making, and ending fossil fuel production and imports as rapidly as possible;*

6. *Providing for re-training for those people currently working in fossil fuel industries; and*
7. *Giving the British people a say in finding a fair way forward via a temporary, independent and representative Climate & Nature Assembly, as part of creating consensus and ensuring that no one and no community is left behind.*

South Kesteven District Council therefore resolves to:

1. *Support the Climate and Ecology Bill;*
2. *Inform local residents and inform local press/media of this decision;*
3. *Write to all 3 MPs that represent South Kesteven to inform them that this motion has been passed, and urge them to sign up to support the CE Bill;*
4. *Write to Zero Hour, the organisers of the cross-party campaign for the CE Bill, expressing South Kesteven District Council's support (councils@zerohour.uk).*

The motion was duly seconded.

It was suggested that speech time be reduced to 2 minutes.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to suspend Council Procedure Rules in relation to the length of speeches for the duration of the motion.

During debate, the following points were raised:

- Whether any research or investigation had been carried out locally, rather than national figures.
- A suggestion was raised that the motion be discussed at the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was proposed and seconded that the meeting be extended by half an hour. This motion fell.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED** to refer the motion to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss relevant items within the motion that related to South Kesteven District Council.

65. Councillor Zoe Lane

Councillor Zoe Lane's motion was not considered due to time constraints and may be heard at the next ordinary meeting of Full Council on 25 January 2024.

66. Close of meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 17:30.